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HOW THE OUTLOOK WILL COME TO YOU

A radio talk by Mr. G. E. Farrell, Extension Service, delivered through Station WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, February 6, 1930.

Nearly 4,000 extension workers in the forty-eight states will open up the campaign next week to place the agricultural outlook before 6,000,000 farmers. It is the aim of extension workers in presenting this outlook, or forecast, to help the farmer in planning his production ahead of planting and breeding season. This will be accomplished through the study of facts bearing upon probable conditions at the time his year's production is ready for the market.

The story of the agricultural outlook is dramatic. Trained men in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics assemble information from every section of the United States and all important foreign countries. This information contains facts on consumption as well as production. About the first of the year these men begin work in earnest on the outlook. Each agricultural commodity is considered and the market prospects for it are worked out and the forecast is prepared, both for the current year and for the long time trend. Then the economists from the various agricultural colleges meet in Washington to discuss the report and the facts upon which it is based. The national outlook this year was released to the public on January 27.

That there is a prospect for an overproduction of cotton or dairy products is helpful information, but the application of that information to planting and feeding programs of the farmer is a more complicated problem. Let us follow the national outlook, or forecast, back to the agricultural college. The problem of the college and the extension staff is to apply the outlook to the conditions that prevail in the state. It is at the agricultural college that definite application of the outlook information is made to the local conditions. Even after the national and state outlook reports are completed, the greatest task remains to be done - the job of taking the information to you and planning with you the adjustments that you can make. During this week the printing presses are turning out the state outlook reports and specialists and state-wide workers are receiving their final training in the application of the forecast to local conditions. Time is an element in the program. The southern farmer is already in the field and not more than six weeks remain in the northern half of the country. The outlook is not merely something for you to know about. It is something for you to act upon, and you must act before the spring work is begun.

The outlook information and the application of it to local conditions will be accomplished by the extension organization by the distribution of national and state outlook reports to extension agents, farmers, and business-men. During the next six weeks the county extension agents and specialists will hold meetings and conferences with farmers. In some of these meetings they will discuss the outlook for all farm products of the area. In other meetings the discussion will be confined to a specific product. The national and state outlook reports will be placed in the hands of the 400,000 local leaders, who will in turn present it to their neighbors and friends.

The press is a powerful factor in spreading the information contained in the national and state forecasts. The farm papers are making the out-

look the subject of feature stories and editorials. The country newspapers are giving it a place on the front page, and the city dailies are carrying the most outstanding features.

Farm organizations and cooperative marketing associations are alert to the value of the outlook report and the trend of production as it affects their members. Their publications and their meetings will discuss the application of the outlook to their membership.

Business men and bankers are vitally interested in the outlook. It will guide them in the stocks of goods to order for the fall trade and the volume of credit to extend.

The race against time to bring the outlook reports to the last farmer is on in earnest. During this week state-wide meetings are being held in Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota, Wisconsin and other states to discuss the outlook. For the last three days the extension workers of the southern states have been in session at Memphis to make plans to reduce the cotton acreage and to plan other crops for the released acres. Next Monday morning the meetings will start out in the country. They will be carefully planned, and the recommendations will be conservative. The farmer who reads the outlook report in the newspapers or listens to a radio talk on the outlook will get some help, but the alert farmer who looks on farming as a business will sit in on the outlook meetings and discuss with his neighbors and the county agricultural agent plans for readjustment that will help to prevent surpluses and at the same time maintain the labor income. The outlook reports are like the headlights on an automobile on a dark night. They help the farmer look ahead in his farming.

If the extension worker does his work well and the farmers make the necessary adjustment, the unfavorable surpluses which the outlook reports forecast will not materialize. The Department of Agriculture and the colleges hope that the number of farmers making adjustment will be sufficient to make undesirable surpluses unlikely. The Federal Farm board has indicated that it looks for surpluses to be eliminated by intelligent adjustment on the farm rather than by disastrously low prices. The crop reports at the close of the year will tell the story.